access to the future fund

Access Advisory Council

2008/2009

Annual Report

I. CHAIR'S LETTER TO THE MINISTER

The Honourable Doug Horner
Minister of Advanced Education and Technology
324 Legislature Building
10800 – 97 Avenue
Edmonton, Alberta T5K 2B6

On behalf of the Access Advisory Council, I am pleased to provide you with our 2008/2009 Annual Report. This report summarizes the Council's activities in its third year of operations.

The Access to the Future Fund was created to enhance and expand opportunities for Albertans to participate in accessible, affordable, and high quality learning opportunities. In its role of providing advice and recommendations regarding the Access to the Future Fund, Council members are committed to ensuring alignment with broader directions for the advanced learning system, working in a collaborative manner, and focusing on continuous improvement. This approach guided our key activities in 2008/2009.

A key accomplishment was conducting the three-year review of the Access to the Future Fund. Stakeholder input informed the review and demonstrated the positive impact that our programming has had on the advanced learning system. It also identified areas where enhancements could be made. In the spirit of Campus Alberta, the Council also brought together key fundraising officials from across the province for an event entitled Fundraising Building Blocks: Developing a Fundraising Community in the Advanced Learning System. Participants had the opportunity to provide input into our three-year review, build stronger relationships with colleagues from other institutions, and share best practices.

The Access to the Future Fund's programming continued to support partnership development both within the advanced learning system, and with broader society. The Renaissance Fund encouraged enhanced partnerships with donors by providing funding that post-secondary institutions and the apprenticeship scholarship program use to match donations received. The Innovation Fund selected eight new projects to support innovative and collaborative approaches to increasing participation in the advanced learning system.

As a Council, we look forward to providing continued support in the ongoing management and development of the Access to the Future Fund.

Sincerely,

Terrance E. Royer
Chair, Access Advisory Council

II. ACCESS ADVISORY COUNCIL OVERVIEW

The Access Advisory Council was appointed in 2006 to provide strategic advice and recommendations to the Minister of Advanced Education and Technology regarding the Access to the Future Fund's objectives, operation, and reporting.

The Council was tasked with the following deliverables:

- Developing and monitoring application, evaluation, and accountability processes
- Reviewing proposals and identifying projects to be funded
- Monitoring successes and outcomes of the Access to the Future Fund
- Reporting on the Access to the Future Fund's activities

THE COUNCIL'S 2008/2009 ACTIVITIES

The Council held quarterly meetings and met with stakeholders including representatives from post-secondary institutions, community learning providers, and student organizations.

The following are highlights of the Council's key accomplishments for 2008/2009:

- Conducted a three-year review of the Access to the Future Fund, producing a series of recommendations for the continued improvement of the Fund. Recommendations were accepted by the Minister.
- Oversaw the continued operation of the Renaissance Fund program which provides grants that recipients use to match donations received. Grants totaling $42.6 million were paid in 2008/2009.
- Conducted an Innovation Fund application process to award project-based funding for initiatives that increase innovation, collaboration, and participation in advanced learning. The Minister accepted the Council's recommendation to fund eight new projects for the 2008/2009 and 2009/2010 fiscal years.
- Hosted a successful seminar entitled Fundraising Building Blocks: Developing a Fundraising Community within the Advanced Learning System. This event brought together individuals who play a key role in fundraising activities in order to share experiences and information, as well as provide feedback to the Council on the Access to the Future Fund.

III. ACCESS TO THE FUTURE FUND OVERVIEW

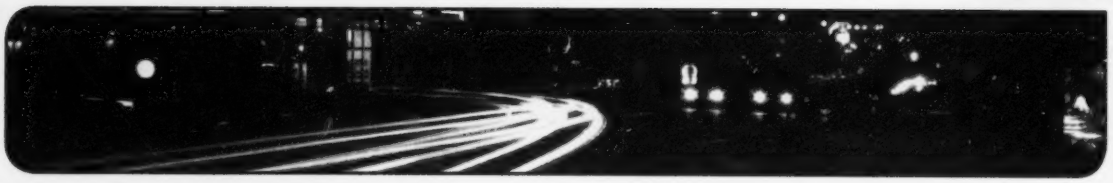
The Government of Alberta created the Access to the Future Fund to enhance and expand accessible, affordable, and high quality learning opportunities within the advanced learning system.

The Access to the Future Fund focuses on fostering collaborative and innovative approaches to increasing participation in advanced learning, as well as leveraging increased private-sector donations to support post-secondary institutions and apprenticeship scholarships. It provides grants which recipients use to match donations received and funds innovative projects focused on helping advanced education providers respond to the needs of learners, the economy, and society in the most effective ways possible.

The Access to the Future Fund achieves its objectives through two programs: the Renaissance Fund and Innovation Fund.

Established in 2005 by the Access to the Future Act, the Access to the Future Fund receives income from an endowment currently valued at $1 billion that is held within the Alberta Heritage Savings Trust Fund.

The Minister of Advanced Education and Technology administers the Access to the Future Fund based on advice and recommendations from the Access Advisory Council. Financial reporting, including the Access to the Future Fund audited financial statements, is incorporated into the ministry's annual report.



IV. THREE-YEAR REVIEW

In July 2006, the Access Advisory Council was established to provide strategic advice and recommendations to the Minister of Advanced Education and Technology regarding the Access to the Future Fund's objectives, operation, and reporting. When it was established, the Council's mandate included initiating a three-year review of the Access to the Future Fund. The Council conducted this review during the 2008/2009 fiscal year.

In conducting its review, the Council invited written stakeholder feedback on the Access to the Future Fund's program design and impact on the advanced learning system. The 28 stakeholder organizations which responded included post-secondary institutions, community learning providers, student organizations, and other stakeholders. Additionally, feedback was received from staff involved in fundraising activities through in-person small group discussions.

The review process resulted in the Council developing a series of recommendations to the Minister regarding future directions for the Access to the Future Fund. In developing these recommendations, the Council's deliberations were informed by stakeholder feedback, an evaluation of the first three years of programming, and the changes in the advanced learning system over the last three years. The impact of the introduction of the Roles and Mandates Policy Framework for Alberta's Publicly Funded Advanced Learning System, the Alberta Access Planning Framework, and Institutional Access Plans were examined as part of the review. All recommendations made by the Council were subsequently accepted by the Minister of Advanced Education and Technology.

The following is a list of the five key recommendations developed by the Council:

1. **Access to the Future Fund program design**
   Maintain the existing program design consisting of the Renaissance Fund and Innovation Fund programs.
2. **Renaissance Fund**
   The Renaissance Fund should continue to provide grants that recipients use to match donations through an allocation-based process with some modifications recommended to the program.
3. **Innovation Fund**
   The Innovation Fund should continue to provide project-based funding to support innovative and collaborative approaches to enhance participation in advanced learning.
4. **Ongoing review and performance measurement**
   The Access to the Future Fund should be evaluated on an ongoing basis by establishing annual performance measures and conducting periodic reviews related to program design and impact.
5. **Communication**
   Communication regarding the Access to the Future Fund should be enhanced in order to increase understanding of how it operates and demonstrate the results achieved through the funding provided.

V. RENAISSANCE FUND

The Renaissance Fund program is designed to stimulate donations to Alberta's advanced learning system. It provides grants to support a wide variety of initiatives that enhance the accessibility, affordability, and quality of educational opportunities for Albertans.

Launched in 2006/2007, the Renaissance Fund provides funding to the following organizations: public post-secondary institutions; independent academic institutions; Aboriginal colleges; and the Alberta Apprenticeship and Industry Training Board Family of Scholarships.

Each year, these organizations are allocated a proportion of the total available funding and are provided the flexibility to identify priority donations for matching.

In 2008/2009, $45 million in new funding was allocated to the Renaissance Fund. A total of $42.6 million was disbursed following the review of submitted documentation. The remaining funds may be paid to eligible recipients in future years.

Over the three years since its inception, the Renaissance Fund has provided $127.6 million to the advanced learning system.

RENAISSANCE FUND GRANTS BY USE OF FUNDS

Renaissance Fund grants have been provided for the following uses:	2008/2009 (in millions)	Cumulative Impact 2006/2007 to 2008/2009	
Applied Research	**$0.7**	**$1.7 million**	**1%**
Endowed Chairs	**$5.9**	**$20.3 million**	**16%**
Equipment for Program Delivery	**$5.5**	**$13.2 million**	**10%**
Facilities for Learning and Research	**$14.6**	**$45.7 million**	**36%**
Scholarships and Bursaries	**$10.1**	**$29.6 million**	**23%**
Sponsored Teaching Positions	**$0.2**	**$1.5 million**	**1%**
Other purposes that enhance the quality of learning and instruction*	**$5.6**	**$15.5 million**	**12%**
Total	$42.6	$127.6 million	

***** includes initiatives such as program development, student supports, and library acquisitions**

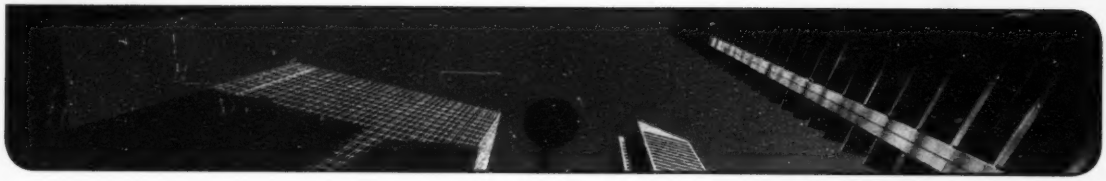
RENAISSANCE FUND GRANTS BY RECIPIENT

Comprehensive Academic and Research Institutions	2008/2009 Grant (in thousands)
Athabasca University	$1,050,000
University of Alberta	$5,000,000
University of Calgary	$5,000,000
University of Lethbridge	$3,000,000

Baccalaureate and Applied Studies Institutions	2008/2009 Grant (in thousands)
Grant MacEwan University	$3,000,000
Mount Royal University	$3,000,000

Comprehensive Community Institutions	2008/2009 Grant (in thousands)
Bow Valley College	$1,200,000
Grande Prairie Regional College	$694,918
Keyano College	$1,200,000
Lakeland College	$1,056,721
Lethbridge College	$1,200,000
Medicine Hat College	$1,200,000
NorQuest College	$1,200,000
Northern Lakes College	$70,560
Olds College	$1,200,000
Portage College	$501,287
Red Deer College	$1,200,000

Polytechnical Institutions	2008/2009 Grant (in thousands)
Northern Alberta Institute of Technology	$3,000,000
Southern Alberta Institute of Technology	$3,000,000



Independent Academic Institutions	2008/2009 Grant (in thousands)
Ambrose University College	$200,000
Canadian University College	$200,000
Concordia University College of Alberta	$200,000
St. Mary's University College	$200,000
Taylor University College and Seminary	$200,000
The King's University College	$200,000

Specialized Arts and Culture Institutions	2008/2009 Grant (in thousands)
The Banff Centre	$1,200,000
Alberta College of Art and Design	$1,244,239

Aboriginal Colleges	2008/2009 Grant (in thousands)
Blue Quills First Nations College*	$400,000
Maskwachees Cultural College	$200,000
Nechi Training, Research and Health Promotions Institute	$200,000
Old Sun Community College	$200,000
Red Crow Community College	$200,000
Yellowhead Tribal College	$200,000

Apprenticeship and Industry Training Board Family of Scholarships	2008/2009 Grant (in thousands)
Apprenticeship Scholarships	$807,000

Total Renaissance Grant Funds (in thousands)	$42,624,725

*** includes payment of Blue Quills First Nations College's 2007/2008 Renaissance Fund allocation**

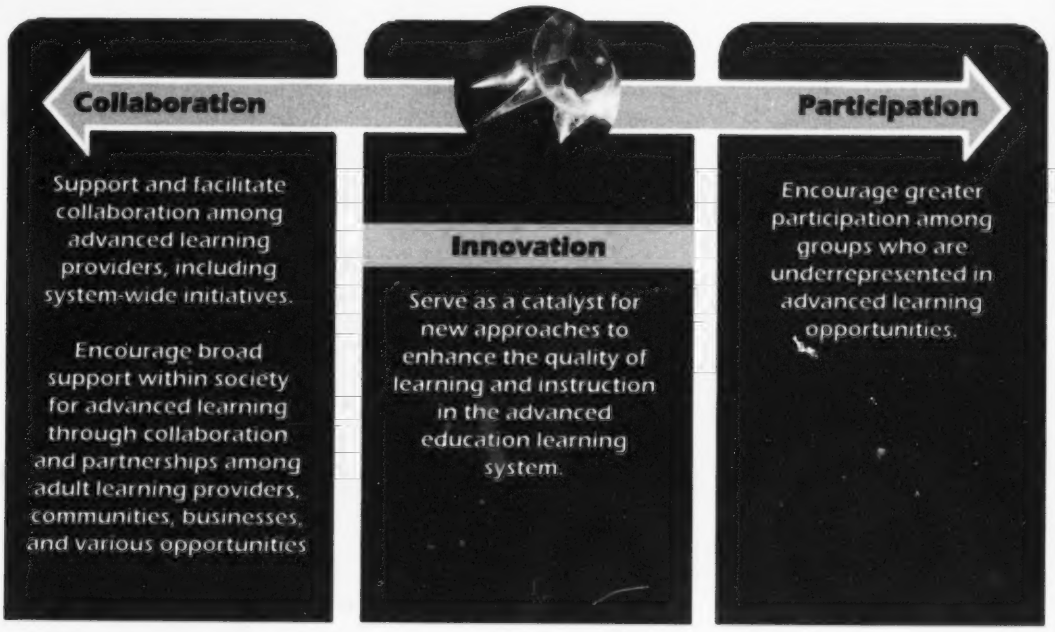
VI. INNOVATION FUND

The Innovation Fund provides targeted investments aimed at boosting the creativity and innovative practices of advanced learning providers, motivating a spirit of collaboration throughout Alberta's advanced learning system, and increasing participation in advanced learning.

Launched in 2007/2008, the Innovation Fund provides project-based funding to initiatives selected through a competitive application process. Eligible organizations are invited to submit project proposals for review by the Access Advisory Council.

Nearly thirty proposals were submitted via the Innovation Fund's application process. The Council assessed these proposals based on the extent to which they would further the Innovation Fund's objectives related to innovation, collaboration, and participation, along with how they further key policy outcomes in the Alberta Access Planning Framework. Based on the recommendations from the Council, the Minister approved funding to eight new projects. Funding will be provided over two years (2008/2009 to 2009/2010).

The Innovation Fund focuses on furthering the following objectives:


Collaboration
Participation
Support and facilitate collaboration among advanced learning providers, including system-wide initiatives.
Encourage broad support within society for advanced learning through collaboration and partnerships among adult learning providers, communities, businesses, and various opportunities
Innovation
Serve as a catalyst for new approaches to enhance the quality of learning and instruction in the advanced education learning system.
Encourage greater participation among groups who are underrepresented in advanced learning opportunities.

INNOVATION FUND - NEW PROJECTS

1.

Best Practices in Supporting Alternative Learners

Recommended grant: $353,500
Bow Valley College, NorQuest College, Northern Alberta Institute of Technology, Chinook Educational Consortium, eCampusAlberta

This project will develop a set of tools and strategies for the successful enhancement of student services to support alternate delivery learners. It will identify best practices in academic, enrolment, and student services that contribute to the success and satisfaction of learners pursuing studies through alternate delivery.

2.

Bridging the Learning in the 21st Century

Recommended grant: $700,000
Lakeland College, East Central Alberta Catholic Separate Schools Regional Division No. 16, Credenda Virtual High School

This pilot project will deliver courses in subject areas relevant to college curriculum in order to provide high school students with dual high school/college credit. It will use technology enhanced instruction as a model for engaging learners in order to encourage both high school completion and transition to post-secondary studies.

3.

Enhancing Experiential and Collaborative Learning in Alberta's Physical Science Education

Recommended grant: $1,750,000
University of Alberta, Athabasca University, University of Lethbridge, University of Calgary, Mount Royal University

This project will enhance the use of spectroscopic instruments and digital technology in physical science education. The project is designed to introduce spectroscopic measurement to students in introductory science courses and enhance the quality of learning opportunities in senior level courses.

Expanding the Use of Advanced Microscopy Equipment to Improve Undergraduate Science Education Through Collaboration and Innovation in the Learning Environment

Recommended grant: $1,750,000
University of Alberta, Athabasca University, University of Lethbridge, University of Calgary

4. This project will build on a previous Innovation Fund project and continue to upgrade microscope technology in approximately 40 student labs across Alberta's universities. The upgraded labs will benefit 7,000 undergraduate students, focusing on those in their first and second years of study. The lab designs allow for collaboration across courses, programs, and institutions.

Health Literacy for Low Literacy Immigrant Women

Recommended grant: $230,236
Calgary immigrant Women's Association, Bow Valley College, Keyano College, Calgary Health Region, Calgary Immigrant Education Society, Lethbridge Family Services, YMCA

5. This project aims to increase health literacy among low literacy immigrant women and their families. The collaborative organizations will develop, test, and disseminate comprehensive health curriculum written in simple English. English as a Second Language instructors and health care professionals will be able to use the curriculum to teach health topics in a culturally sensitive manner.

Humanities 101

Recommended grant: $131,200
St. Mary's University College, Ambrose University College, University of Calgary

6. This project will offer university-level humanities courses to low-income, non-traditional adult learners. Collaborating institutions will develop and make available courses in humanities that will engage the non-traditional learner in order to develop confidence in learning capabilities and encourage further desire for advanced education.

7.

Inclusive Student Engagement Model for Under-Represented Populations

Recommended grant: $540,000
NorQuest College, Bow Valley College

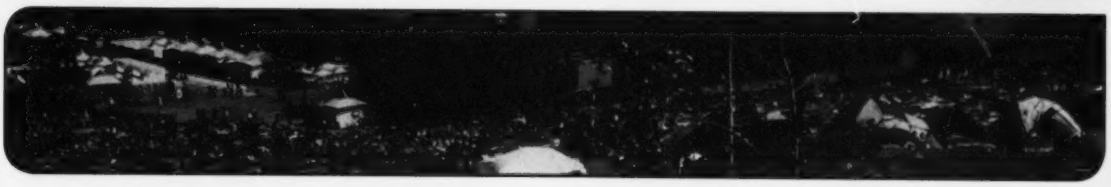
This project will develop and pilot strategies to more effectively meet the needs of increasingly diverse student populations. It will examine the full range of student supports needed to increase participation and completion rates of groups that are typically underrepresented in post-secondary education and the labour market.

8.

Rural Experiential Learning Initiative

Recommended grant: $100,000
University of Alberta, community partners

This project will bring undergraduate students into a rural community to participate in experimental learning projects that address the challenges and issues identified by the community. It aims to 'make real' the classroom learning of students by engaging them in projects that will impact the future sustainability of the community.



VII. DEVELOPING A FUNDRAISING COMMUNITY IN THE ADVANCED LEARNING SYSTEM

On October 29 and 30, 2008, the Council hosted an event that brought together members of post-secondary institutions' fundraising staff as well as individuals at institutions that play leadership roles in securing donations.

The seminar was designed to allow discussion among attendees as well as provide opportunities for inter-institutional relationship development and feedback on the Access to the Future Fund.

All organizations eligible for funding from the Renaissance Fund matching program were invited to send one or more individuals to participate. Individuals from 32 of the 34 invited organizations attended. A total of approximately 80 institution officials attended over the course of the day and a half event.

Day 1 of the seminar consisted of two plenary sessions, focusing on fundraising trends along with a corporate giving panel discussion. The day also provided participants the opportunity to split into discussion groups to discuss success and challenges of fundraising, as well as future ways to enhance the fundraising community in Alberta's advanced learning system. The small discussion groups also provided the opportunity to provide feedback into the Council's three-year review process.

Day 2 was optional and focused on enhancing the fundraising capacity of smaller institutions that are in the early phases of developing their fundraising programs. This session consisted of a hands-on workshop focusing on the development of the internal infrastructure and planning necessary to increase fundraising activities.

PARTICIPANT EVALUATION

The Access Advisory Council developed a comprehensive seminar evaluation which was implemented to receive participant feedback regarding the quality and relevance of the seminar. This information will be used to help develop future sessions.

VIII. COUNCIL MEMBERSHIP IN 2008/2009

Terrance E. Royer, Chair: Is the Executive Chairman of Royco Hotels and a former board chair of the University of Lethbridge. He has served on many public, private, and volunteer boards, including the Alberta Ingenuity Fund, Mount Royal College's Board of Governors, and the management advisory board of the University of Calgary's Faculty of Management.

Harold Banister: Is the President of Banister Investment Group and an associate of Banister Research & Consulting Inc. He serves on the Edmonton Community Foundation's finance committee and is a former member of the University of Alberta senate.

Peter Freeman: Is a former board chair of St. Mary's University College with significant board experience at the provincial and national level. His professional experience includes time as the executive director of the Law Society of Alberta, as well as positions at the University of Alberta and the Supreme Court of Canada.

Michael Frey: Is a retired chartered accountant with executive experience on boards serving his community including the United Way of Grande Prairie & Region. He has served as chair and trustee of hospital foundations and is a former board member of the Alberta Law Foundation.

Grant Howell: Is a retired human resources executive and chair of the Alberta Local Authorities Pension Plan, as well as other pension and not-for-profit boards. He is a former vice-chair of Red Deer College's Board of Governors and director with the Alberta Congress Board.

Lou Hyndman: Currently serves as Counsel with Field LLP and is a former Alberta cabinet minister as Provincial Treasurer, Minister of Education, and Minister of Federal and Intergovernmental Affairs. He is a former Chancellor of the University of Alberta and former trustee and vice-chair of the Alberta Heritage Foundation for Medical Research.

Pamela MacGillivray: Is a former high school principal and a former board chair of Keyano College. She has served on a variety of educational related boards and committees at the local, provincial, and national level, including as a former chair of the Keyano College Foundation.

Alan Moon: Is a former President and Chief Operating Officer of TransAlta Energy Corporation and is currently a corporate consultant and director for several publicly traded companies. He is also a board member of the Kahanoff Foundation and has served as a board member of many not-for-profit organizations.

William G. Sembo: Is Vice Chairman and Managing Director of RBC Capital Markets. He has served on many public, private and volunteer boards, including Calgary Economic Development, Calgary YMCA, Calgary Health Region, Calgary and Area United Way Campaign, and the University of Calgary's Faculty of Medicine Advisory Board.

ACCESS ADVISORY COUNCIL

advancededandtech.alberta.ca/post-secondary/funding/supportsinstitutions/aff/council.aspx

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